

**HEARING AID DISPENSERS BUREAU**

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Guidelines for Supervision of Trainees

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Licensing Law provides for a Temporary-Trainee License to facilitate training of new personnel to enter the profession of hearing aid dispensing. The purpose of temporary-trainee licensure is to ensure that an adequate number of trained, fully-licensed hearing aid dispensers is available to California's hearing-impaired consumers.

Temporary-trainee licenses are issued in accordance with provisions of the licensing law and regulations related to the practice of hearing aid dispensing. The trainee license cannot be issued unless a fully-licensed dispenser has applied and been approved to serve as the applicant's supervisor. **The regulations require that a dispenser have a valid, active California hearing aid dispenser license for at least three (3) years in order to supervise a trainee.**

The Temporary-Trainee License

1. A Temporary-Trainee License is issued for six (6) months and may be renewed twice. A trainee may not begin work until the trainee license is **received by the trainee** at the supervisory facility.
2. The law requires each trainee to take the licensing examination within ten (10) months from the date the trainee license is issued. Licenses are withdrawn and license renewal is prohibited for individuals who do not meet this requirement.

Supervision Requirements

1. The law requires that an individual holding a trainee License must be directly supervised. This means that the supervising dispenser must be physically present in the same work setting as the trainee a minimum of 20% of the time.
2. In the case of a trainee who has failed the licensing examination, the law requires that the supervising dispenser be physically present in the same work setting as the trainee 100% of the time. The supervising dispenser must be present when the trainee is with a client.

Responsibilities of the Approved Supervisor

1. Each licensee applying to supervise a trainee should read the laws and regulations pertaining to supervision, prior to completing the supervision application.
2. The approved supervisor is responsible for providing direct supervision until the trainee obtains a permanent license, or the supervisor/trainee relationship is terminated.
3. A trainee's supervisor is responsible for all acts or omissions committed by the trainee while practicing the fitting and selling of hearing aids.
4. If the supervisor/trainee relationship is severed, the supervisor must notify the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau in writing and return the trainee license.

5. To develop a training program that will provide maximum benefit to the supervisor and trainee, the supervisor should prepare a training plan after reviewing the *Candidate Handbook for the Written Examination* and current laws and regulations. An outline of this plan should be shared with the trainee.
6. Regulations require that the supervisor intervene in the hearing aid fitting and selling process of the trainee, inspect that process, and review results of each fitting and sale performed by the trainee.
7. During periods when the supervising dispenser is not physically present in the same work setting as the trainee, the supervisor must be readily available to the trainee to render advice and give instructions and assistance in the fitting and selling of hearing aids. For this reason, supervisors should avoid assigning trainees to perform unsupervised house calls or fieldwork.
8. In every individual case of hearing aid fitting and sale, the records must include written evidence (signature) that the supervisor has examined all records and tests made by the trainee and concurs with the hearing aid fitting and sale. This evidence should indicate that the supervisor's intervention into the hearing aid fitting and selling process occurred in a timely fashion to permit alteration of the proposed hearing aid fitting, when necessary.
9. The law requires that a hearing aid receipt contain the name and license number of the licensee negotiating the sale, and the name and license number of any dispenser providing consultation on the sale. This means that the supervisor must countersign receipts for hearing aids sold by trainees.

Points to Remember

1. Hearing-impaired consumers must be protected from improper actions of trainees that could cause physical injury to the ear or the fitting or sale of inappropriate hearing aids.
2. Trainees must be assured of a reasonable on-the-job training effort by their supervisors and deserve protection from employer exploitation.
3. The law prohibits temporary licensees from being the sole proprietor, manager, or franchisee of a business where hearing aids are fit and sold.
4. The law prohibits trainees from representing themselves as hearing aid dispensers. Thus, trainees must be properly identified as such in advertising, signs, business cards, and other public communications.